

Message Text

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ACTION FSE-00

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R 161954Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5570

INFO USOFFICE RFC PARIS

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 5028

DEPT FOR BF/FS/AD/G

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFIN, SY

SUBJ: CASHIER'S ADVANCE

REF: A. STATE 285649

B. PARIS 31839

D. DAMASCUS 4753 (NOTAL)

A. THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL JUSTIFICATION IS SUBMITTED
IN SUPPORT OF DAMASCUS' REQUEST CONTAINED REFTEL C
THAT THE CASHIER'S ADVANCE BE INCREASED FROM DOLLARS
50,000 TO 75,000.

1. NOTWITHSTANDING THE INFORMATION CONTAINED PARA 3 OF
REFTEL B. THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES (NOT
COUNTING ADULT DEPENDENTS) CURRENTLY SERVICED BY
THIS POST IS 46 AMERICANS (19 STATE, 3 DATT, 7 AID,
7 MARINES, 10 (AVERAGE) TDY'ERS AND 51 LOCALS (36
STATE, 1 DATT, 14 AID).

2. APPROXIMATELY DOLLARS 8,500 OF THE CASHIER'S ADVANCE
IS IN U.S. BANK NOTES OF WHICH \$5,000 IS PERMENTLY
BLOCKED FOR E AND E PURPOSES. THE OTHER \$3,500 FOR
DISBURSEMENT TO PERSONNEL TRAVELLING ABROAD SINCE
NEITHER U.S. GREEN NOR TRAVELLER'S CHECKS ARE
AVAILABLE LOCALLY.

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3. \$8,200 EQUIVALENT IN SYRIAN POUNDS REPRESENTS A MINIMUM

RESERVE FOR EMERGENCY USE IN MEETING NON-DEFERRABLE
PAYMENTS WHEN REPLENISHMENT CHECKS ARE NOT RECEIVED
ON SCHEDULE AS RESULT OF STRIKES ETC.

4. ACCOMMODATION EXCHANGES FOR AMERICANS AVERAGE \$33,000
IN SYRIAN POUNDS PER MONTH. LOCAL AIRLINE AGENTS REQUIRE
THAT TICKETS FOR NON-OFFICIAL TRAVEL BE PAID FOR IN
SYRIAN CASH WHICH MEANS THAT SOME ACCOMMODATION
EXCHANGES AMOUNT TO SEVERAL HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS.

5. BANKING FACILITIES IN DAMASCUS ARE FEW AND THE
MAJORITY OF BUSINESS PEOPLE AS WELL
AS OFFICIALS OF GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION PREFER TO
BE PAID IN CASH RATHER THAN BY CHECK.

6. THERE ARE NO LARGE DEPARTMENT NOR HARDWARE STORES IN
DAMASCUS. MOST FIRMS WITH WHICH THE EMBASSY DOES
BUSINESS ARE OF THE "MOM AND POP" VARIETY AND BUSINESS
IS CONDUCTED ON A CASH AND CARRY BASIS. WHEN WE BUY
SOMETHING THE SELLER WANTS HIS MONEY IMMEDIATELY.

7. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED AID
MISSION GROW WITH EACH WEEK THAT PASSES. THE
STEADY STREAM OF TDY'ERS AND THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE
PROGRAM HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE STEADY INCREASE
IN CASHIER ACTIVITIES.

8. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, THE DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED
TO APPROVE INCREASING THE CASHIER ADVANCE TO \$75,000.
MURPHY

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